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**COLOMBIAN BUSINESSMAN CONVICTED IN
NARCOTICS MONEY LAUNDERING PROSECUTION**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that PABLO TRUJILLO, a businessman from Bogota, Colombia, was convicted in Manhattan federal court yesterday on charges of conspiracy to commit money laundering. The charges are in connection with TRUJILLO's participation in a scheme to launder approximately \$1.7 million in drug proceeds collected in the United States through bank accounts he operated in Colombia.

After a six-day jury trial, and less than thirty minutes of jury deliberations, the jury found TRUJILLO guilty of the sole count of an Indictment that charged him with conspiring to launder narcotics proceeds. The charges resulted from "Operation Wirecutter," a joint US-Colombian investigation into the laundering of millions of dollars in narcotics proceeds from the United States to drug traffickers in Colombia.

United States District Judge LEWIS A. KAPLAN, who presided at the trial, scheduled TRUJILLO'S sentencing for November 14, 2003, at 11:00 A.M.

According to the evidence at trial, in 2001, TRUJILLO worked at a company called Sierras del Nilo ("Sierras") in Bogota, Colombia. While working at Sierras, TRUJILLO operated several accounts in Colombian banks in the names of Sierras and other Colombian companies.

During this same period, the testimony showed a confidential source ("CS") working in Bogota at the direction of agents the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("BICE") (formerly known as the United States Customs Service) posed as someone who could assist narcotics "money brokers" in picking up cash drug proceeds in the United States, depositing the money into a bank account in the United States and transferring the money to accounts in Colombia. According to the evidence at trial, money brokers serve as intermediaries between the Colombian drug traffickers and the drug dealers in the United States wishing to pay the drug traffickers for the drugs smuggled into the United States.

According to the evidence at trial, TRUJILLO instructed the CS to transfer the drug money he collected in the United States on behalf of other money brokers into accounts TRUJILLO operated. TRUJILLO then paid the CS an equivalent amount in pesos in

Colombia, less a commission TRUJILLO earned based on a percentage of the laundered funds. TRUJILLO performed the same service for Ramiro Mansano, a narcotics money launderer in Bogota. The evidence at trial showed that from June 2001 through January 2002, the CS and Mansano transferred over \$1.7 million in narcotics proceeds into Colombian accounts at TRUJILLO's direction.

According to the evidence at trial, in October 2001, TRUJILLO expanded his role in the money laundering conspiracy and attempted to arrange for the delivery of narcotics proceeds in the United States and their transfer to Colombia. On one occasion, in November 2001, TRUJILLO arranged for the delivery of approximately \$200,000 in drug proceeds in a parking lot in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The evidence at trial also demonstrated that TRUJILLO utilized numeric and verbal codes to arrange for the transfer of the funds and paid exorbitant fees to the individuals involved in this transaction, including \$8,000 to the individuals picking up the cash in Puerto Rico and another \$8,000 to the CS who arranged for the transfer of the drug proceeds to Colombia.

Earlier this month, Ramiro Mansano pled guilty to conspiracy to commit money laundering before the Honorable Richard Owen. No sentencing date has yet been scheduled.

TRUJILLO and Mansano each face a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a maximum fine of the greater of \$500,000 or

twice the value of the funds involved in the money laundering offense.

TRUJILLO was among seven defendants extradited from Colombia thus far as part of Operation Wirecutter. These extraditions are believed to be the first from Colombia to the United States solely on charges of laundering narcotics proceeds. To date, the international investigation has resulted in 42 arrests in the United States and Colombia, seizures of more than \$7 million in narcotics proceeds and 725 kilograms of cocaine.

Mr. COMEY praised the outstanding investigative efforts of the El Dorado Task Force, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and thanked the Colombian Department of Administrative Security for their assistance in the investigation.

Assistant United States Attorneys DANIEL R. MARGOLIS and NEIL M. BAROFSKY are in charge of the prosecution.

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